



SCOTT BRUHN/DN

MEGAN KORVER pounds an attack through the Baylor block last Saturday. Nebraska will meet Texas on Friday with the Big 12 title on the line.

# NU to meet UT, A&M

## Huskers' match with Texas carries title implications

BY TREVOR PARKS  
Senior Reporter

“Obviously Nebraska and Texas both have set their sights on something bigger than just this weekend.”

MICK HALEY  
Texas volleyball coach

The importance of the Nebraska volleyball team's trip to the Lone Star State this weekend goes far beyond winning the Big 12 championship.

The fifth-ranked Cornhuskers, 25-3 overall and 17-1 in the Big 12, are hoping to use matches at eighth-ranked Texas (22-4 and 16-2) Friday and at No. 14 Texas A&M (23-6 and 14-4) Saturday as a springboard to the NCAA Tournament.

With two wins this weekend, Nebraska will likely play host to an NCAA regional for the third-straight year.

“I don't think we are consciously doing anything different,” NU Coach Terry Pettit said. “I think everybody knows we are pushing toward the NCAA Tournament, and we will play these matches just like NCAA Tournament matches.”

The 48-team tournament field will be announced Sunday at 5 p.m.

Although the Huskers are a lock to earn a bid to defend their national title, more than NCAA-Tournament implications will be on the line when NU faces the Longhorns at the Erwin Center Friday night at 7.

The first-ever conference title hangs in the balance.

Although the tournament looms on the horizon, senior Maria Hedbeck said, winning the conference crown is one of this team's major goals.

“Our first goal we set before the season was to win the Big 12, and we can do that Friday night,” Hedbeck said. “This weekend is a good check to see where we stand at.”

The only way Nebraska can totally blow its one-match advantage over Texas is by losing both matches this weekend coupled with a UT win over Colorado on Saturday.

If Texas beats Nebraska and both teams finish tied for first, the Big 12 will use a tie-breaker system to determine which team earns the league's automatic NCAA bid.

The first tie-breaker is head-to-head games. As long as NU isn't swept by the Longhorns, Nebraska will win the title by virtue of its three-game sweep of Texas earlier this season in Lincoln.

Texas Coach Mick Haley said the Longhorns, who have won 10-straight matches after losing at the NU Coliseum on Oct. 19, have found a rhythm in the past three weeks.

“We are playing a lot better now than when we did that weekend,” said Haley, whose squad lost to NU in four games last season in the national championship match. “Everybody has finally developed a role.”

The best teams in the country improve a lot in the final third of the season, he said.

“Emotionally, it's not the end of the road this weekend,” Pettit said. “We need to use this weekend to find out where we are at and gear up for the

Volleyball

---

at Texas, Friday, 7 p.m.

---

at Texas A&M, Saturday, 7 p.m.

NCAA Tournament.”  
Haley agreed that this match will show his team where it is — and where it needs to be — heading into the postseason.

“Obviously Nebraska and Texas both have set their sights on something bigger than just this weekend,” Haley said. “Both are trying to get in position to win the national championship.”

**Note:**

As of Monday afternoon, more than 3,500 tickets had been sold for the match and more than 7,000 people were expected to attend. The Texas-Texas A&M match in Austin on Nov. 13 drew a season-high 6,123 fans.

Friday's match will be televised live by the FoxSports Network, Channel 58 in Lincoln.

# Portland up next for NU

Huskers can advance to the Final Four with a win Sunday.

BY VINCE D'ADAMO  
Staff Reporter

Thanksgiving may be Thursday, but the fifth-ranked Nebraska soccer team wants to satisfy its hunger on Sunday.

With NCAA-Tournament wins over Minnesota and Duke, the unbeaten Cornhuskers are on the doorstep of the Final Four — which will be played Dec. 6 through 8 in Santa Clara, Calif.

This time, the Huskers (23-0) travel to the Pacific Northwest to try to clear their next obstacle. Nebraska meets third-ranked Portland (18-0-2) on Sunday at 3 p.m.

The Pilots, advanced to the quarterfinals by getting past Vanderbilt 3-1 on Sunday. Portland out-shot the Commodores 38-2 and carries a 20-game unbeaten streak and an 11-game winning streak into Sunday's game despite playing for the last month without Coach Clive Charles, an assistant on the U.S. National Team.

Charles will not rejoin the Pilots this season, unless they qualify for the Final Four.

The only blemishes on the Pilot schedule are a pair of 1-1 ties to Duke and Cal-Poly San Luis Obispo. Portland has out-scored its opposition 51-7. Junior Justi Baumgardt leads the Pilots with 36 points on 13 goals. Freshman goalkeeper Cheryl Loveless has posted 12 shutouts.

Portland returns nine starters from last year's roster. Nebraska Coach John Walker said the Pilots are among the top teams in college soccer.

“They have no weaknesses,” Walker said. “They're experienced, very skilled and very fast. They're strong at all positions.”

Portland is bidding for its third Final Four berth in as many seasons. In last year's national-championship game, the Pilots fell 1-0 in overtime to Notre Dame.

Portland Assistant Coach Garrett Smith said a return trip to the Final Four will not be easy against Nebraska.

“Plain and simple,” Smith said, “the most impressive thing is they win games.”

The Pilots have an edge in experience in addition to the home-field advantage. But while the youthful Huskers respect the Pilots, they said they won't be awed by Portland.

“It's right there,” NU sophomore Becky Hogan said. “We're just 90

Soccer

---

NCAA Tournament third round

---

at Portland, Sunday, 3 p.m.



minutes away. It's like instead of having the fear of the unknown, we're eager to rise to the next level and see where we can go with it. There's no fear in what we're doing.”

In Sunday's 3-0 win over Duke, Hogan scored the first goal to jumpstart the Huskers six minutes into the game.

Goalkeeper Becky Hornbacher, who recorded her 14th shutout, said the Huskers' success has opened some eyes. However, Hornbacher said, some critics still short-change NU's success.

“We're getting recognition,” Hornbacher said. “Some teams are taking notice. But I still don't think other teams are taking us seriously.”

Striker Kristen Gay agreed. “We've won some big games on the road,” Gay said, “but I think there's still some people out there that don't think we're for real. We just have to come out with the same intensity.”

**Note:**

Hornbacher, Kari Uppinghouse, Isabelle Morneau, Lindsay Eddleman and Jenny Benson gained first-team All-Central Region honors on Monday. Gay and Heather Brown made the second team, and Hogan and Sharolta Nonen earned third-team honors.

# Husker wrestlers head to Mat Town

BY ANTONE OSEKA  
Senior Editor

Nebraska heavyweight Tolly Thompson was among five Cornhusker wrestlers to claim their first championship of the season last Saturday at the Kaufman-Brand Open at the UNO Fieldhouse in Omaha.

No team scoring was kept in Nebraska's first competition of the 1996-97 season.

Thompson was the last Husker to leave Omaha with a championship. The roll started in the 118-pound class with freshman Todd Beckerman taking the championship.

Beckerman, from Crofton, Md., beat Cody Bicklet of Fort Hays State. Beckerman will redshirt this season.

At 126 pounds, junior Jeramie Welder took home his first championship since 1994, beating Adam Feldman of South Dakota State 6-4. The roll continued through 134 pounds.

In the 134-pound class, junior Brad Canoyer beat Northern Iowa's Dusty Rhodes 9-4. Canoyer, who earned All-America honors at 118 pounds as a freshman, proved Saturday that he could wrestle two classes above the weight at which he has competed for the last two years.

The victories then stopped rolling for Nebraska until 220-pounder Ryan Tobin beat Dan

Radik of the Maverick Wrestling Club. Tobin wrestled unattached at the meet and will redshirt this season for NU.

The championships were a good sign, said NU Coach Tim Neumann, whose team is preparing for the Mat Town Invitational, Saturday in Lock Haven, Penn.

Nebraska will challenge two top-10 teams — fourth-ranked Penn State and No. 6 Lock Haven — for the team championship. It's the first team-scored meet of the season.

Every team is allowed to enter two wrestlers at each of the 10 weights. But the team score will be kept for only 10 wrestlers.

One of the key match-ups of the meet will

be at heavyweight, where Thompson, the 1995 heavyweight national champion, squares off against Kerry McCoy of Penn State, who is the 1994 heavyweight national champion.

“Tolly looked better than he has in two years,” Neumann said. “He took a kid apart from Minnesota.”

“It was fun to watch him wrestle.”

One weak spot for Nebraska at Mat Town is at 167 pounds, where NU lost starter Monte Christensen. He injured his left knee and will be out for two to three weeks, Neumann said. That leaves Nebraska without a wrestler at 167.

“We're a little thin there,” Neumann said.